

<crew talk>

**Judith LaFleur:** The following oral history interview was conducted by Commander Judith LaFleur, USNR, Naval Historical Centre, and Karen Byrne National Parks Service, for the National Parks Service USS Arizona Memorial, at the Ala Moana Hotel, Honolulu, Hawaii, on December 6th, 2001, at 1:45 in the afternoon. The person being interviewed is Ralph William Landreth, who was a Gunner's Mate Second Class on the USS Arizona on December 7th 1941. Good afternoon.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Good evening. That's southern.

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay. For the record-- For the record, would you please state your full name, and give us your place and date of birth?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Ralph William Landreth. I was born in Carthage, Missouri.

**Ralph William Landreth:** What day were you born on? What's your date of birth?

**Ralph William Landreth:** January 17th, '21.

**Judith LaFleur:** 1921. Okay, and in 1941, where did you consider to be your home town?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Los Angeles, that's where I joined the navy, yeah.

**Judith LaFleur:** Did your family move out to California?

**Ralph William Landreth:** They moved out to California when I was a year old. And uh.. then my mother died in.. my father took me to Florida during the boom times, and when the boom died, we moved back to California.

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay. And how many brothers and sisters did you have, or do you have?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Oh, I had two uh.. a brother and a sister, much older than myself. Then I had a brother that was just three years older than me. I was the youngest.

**Judith LaFleur:** And what were your parents' names?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Oh, well.. was Hattie Pearl Elliott Landreth, and Skyler Sheridan Landreth.

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay. Where did you go to high school?

**Ralph William Landreth:** LA.

**Judith LaFleur:** And can you tell us where and why you enlisted in the navy?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, you- you know, this was the tail end of the Depression times, and jobs weren't all that plentiful. And besides, my brother had joined the navy three years before. And hey-- he's there, I'll be there.

**Judith LaFleur:** When did you enlist in the navy?

**Ralph William Landreth:** September '39.

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay. Now what kind of training did you get after you enlisted in the navy?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, nothing special, I was sent out to boot camp in San Diego, and then I was.. from there I went to the Arizona.

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay, and when did you decide that you wanted to be a Gunner's Mate?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, that was easy. Life for a Seaman, Second Class in a deck division isn't eas- easy. And uh.. the next best thing is in going to gun crew. They took me, and there I was.

**Judith LaFleur:** So when you reported into the Arizona, that was.. where was the Arizona?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Uh.. they had been off uh.. no, I think it came uh.. came from Pemberton. And I had to wait on the uh.. hospital ship in San Pedro till they came back, which was about a week. And uh.. when I went on board, I can't remember, but it was in January. And uh.. '40, yeah.

**Judith LaFleur:** So-- 1940?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah.

Judith LaFleur: And when did the Arizona go to Hawaii?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well uh..

**Judith LaFleur:** With you aboard.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah, with me aboard. It was in '40. And we went there to join the fleet. There was a gathering of the fleet, and uh.. you know, by this time, it was 1939, and by the way, it was when Franklin Roosevelt declared a state of emergency. And uh.. they knew it was coming then. And.. they gathered the fleet there, and we all enjoyed ourself, and went down and roasted on the equator for a few days and came back, and then the work began. We started out training, you know, training exercises and- and uh.. actually running patrols for submarines. They ran two off and one on, watches on deck all the time they were out, for submarines. You see, a speck of white water, you better tell the bridge about it. And uh.. that went on for- for a year, before, you know, or more, a year and a half.

**Judith LaFleur:** So when was the first time you went to Hawaii, to Pearl Harbor?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, with the ship there in- in '40.

**Judith LaFleur:** So, it would have been 1940.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah.

**Judith LaFleur:** Now, what were your normal duties as a Gunner's Mate Second Class on the Arizona?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, uh.. actually, duties aren't that-- make much difference inside the turret. Because uh.. I was in charge of the gun pit, you know, and uh.. probably one or two Seamen in the crew would be cleaning all the time. Every day, they shined the steel work around, it was all steelwork, no paint in the gun pit, it held these three and 14 inch guns, yeah, like I used to-- The Missouri's got 16s, but the same way. And uh.. I was in charge of them, and.. I don't really know what I did as supervision.

**Judith LaFleur:** How long would you be on watch, when the ship was in port, how long would you be on watch each day?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Oh, the watches, well, see, our battle station's in the turret but, you know, we-- we belonged to the fourth deck division, and that's-- we were part of them to uh.. spread the watches around. You know, the actual four on-- three on, four, one off.

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay, and they were four hour watches?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah.

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay. And so when you weren't with the fourth deck division, then you were doing your gunner's mate's duties, is that correct?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Mm-hmm, yeah.

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay. And when you were doing duties as part of the fourth deck division, what were your duties there?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, you mean, when I first went on the ship.

**Judith LaFleur:** Well, let's talk about a time--

**Ralph William Landreth:** I was a Seaman, yeah.

**Judith LaFleur:** Let's talk about the time right around December of 1941.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Oh, well I really didn't have any duties with the deck division. You know, except for the watches. And uh.. before of course as a seaman, on the fourth division, you-- Do you know what a holy stone is?

**Judith LaFleur:** No, I don't.

**Ralph William Landreth:** It's a brick, about that big, with a hole in it, and they stick a broomstick in there, and you get down and scrub those wood decks with that, to clean them.

**Judith LaFleur:** Oh.

**Ralph William Landreth:** <laughs> You get up at four o'clock in the morning to do this. <laughs>

**Judith LaFleur:** So would that be considered sweeping the decks?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, no, they-- you- they swept, and then they washed them off with fire hoses, and then you did the scrubbing.

**Judith LaFleur:** So that would be the scrubbing.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Mm-hmm. That was to make them white. They had to glisten. No oil spots, no gum, no nothing better be on there when the Captain came through there, you know.

**Judith LaFleur:** Interesting. Okay, do you remember what you did on December 6, 1941?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Sixth?

**Judith LaFleur:** The day before the attack?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Not really. I can't-- I really cannot remember.

**Judith LaFleur:** You were living on board the ship, correct?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah.

**Judith LaFleur:** And where was your berthing?

**Ralph William Landreth:** That-- we were all tied up to the same quay where it is now.

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay, where were you-- where was your living space on the ship?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Oh, it was down in the uh.. lower handling room of the turret, you know where the powder rooms are? They got a lower handling room, is where you transfer the powder from the magazines to the conveyors and hydraulic lifts that take the ammunition up.

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay, did you have hammocks, or did you have bunk beds?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Oh, no I had cots.

**Judith LaFleur:** Cots?

**Ralph William Landreth:** As-- while I was part of the deck division, you slept in hammocks. They didn't- they were one of the last ships to get bunks.  
<laughs>

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay, so you don't remember what you did on the evening of December 6th, then?

**Ralph William Landreth:** I can't remember.

**Judith LaFleur:** So why don't we talk about December 7th, then? Do you remember where you were in the morning of December 7th?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah, uh.. I got a good- good memory then. I just had breakfast. It was near eight o'clock and I came out to buy a Sunday paper, and I'd go below to wile away Sunday morning. And uh.. I was buying a paper, and it- well, let me go back a little bit. Every Sunday morning, Hickham Field and sometimes Ford Island, would hold exercises, with planned attacks on Pearl Harbor. I don't know what they was getting out of this, but, see- they uh.. anyway, Sunday morning was the day for that to happen. And I come out and hear the planes, and I look up and there's a red ball on one of the planes. And uh.. "Oh man, they're getting realistic with this thing." And, "Ah well, I'll go on down to read the paper." <laughs> I got halfway down there. We had to go through the third deck, you know, and uh.. to get into the lower handling room where I lived, and they sounded general quarters, clang-clang-clang, you know, and uh.. came over the speaker, uh.. "This is not a drill. Battle stations." And so I sort of broke into a trot, you know, and I-- going down-- there was nobody around me, nobody in front of me, nobody in back of me, and I don't know, everybody else finished breakfast before I did, I guess. They were already holed up. Anyway, that- I broke into a trot, and closing hatches behind me, which we were supposed to do, and uh.. got to the- my station down there, and in turmoil. I mean, they- they had nobody know what to do, you know. But I had- I knew what I had to do, I had to climb the ladder through the- through the shell deck, and on up to the pits, the gun pits, and which I did.

**Judith LaFleur:** To get to your battle station.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah. And.. by the time I got there, you- you know, it was pretty clear of what was happening. You could hear the strafing out from the gun ports, you know, and pretty soon, here come uh.. big blasts that knocked me off my feet. I wonder I didn't hit my head on the steel, you know, and we knew then what it was all about. And uhm.. it wasn't very long, there was people, all those people in the lower <inaudible> come streaming up through there, and out the hatch on the quarterdeck.

**Judith LaFleur:** It knocked you off your feet? So did you say the blast knocked you off your feet?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah.

**Judith LaFleur:** Did you get hurt, or bang--

**Ralph William Landreth:** No, that's what I say, it's all steel, it's a wonder I didn't knock a hole in my head with hitting on a sharp edge of steel.

**Judith LaFleur:** So people started coming up, you were saying.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah, and they was telling about the batteries were broke, and the acid and fumes were in that lower-- the first thing out of the lower handling room, was- where they handled the powder, was up to batteries, which drive the hydraulic power, and the next was shell decks, you know, where the shells, about that high, a thousand pounds each, and uh.. they- they was telling me that the batteries had broken, and the guy on the shell deck was killed trying to wrestle one of those shells into the- into a tray that shoots it up to the gun pit.

**Judith LaFleur:** You say the shells are about four feet tall, three to four--

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah, I guess..

**Judith LaFleur:** Be careful of the wire.

**Ralph William Landreth:** It's about five feet, isn't it?

**Judith LaFleur:** It's about five feet?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah, yeah.

**Judith LaFleur:** How big around?



**Ralph William Landreth:** Fourteen inches.

**Judith LaFleur:** Fourteen inches, that makes sense.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, the-- Yeah, that's- they had to fit in the chamber of the gun, yeah. And uh.. they uh.. anyway, they told me that, so I knew it was really bad, and pretty soon, some of them coming up saying, "There's water in the lower handling room." And I had an inkling to get in line with them to getting out of there. Something made me stay there for some reason, and- and I watched them come and go, and pretty soon it was over. It wasn't long. And uh..

**Judith LaFleur:** You mean the attack was over, or what was over?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Oh, the attack was over, and there was no more people coming up out of there, and- and uh.. I figured, well it's time for me to leave, and I walked out, climbed out of the hatch on the back end of the turret, and the water was just coming over the edge of the <inaudible> of the fantail there, and uh.. I got out there and I saw a shell. It looked like a bomb, you know, a Japanese bomb. Hey, one didn't go off. But that was-- <laughs> it turned out later, Mr. Fragellio [ph?] told me it was a not a bomb, it was a shell from turret two, that got blown in the sky and landed on the back of our turret. <laughs> Now, anyway, by the time I got through sightseeing and everything, here's the Admiral barge-- Admiral's barge and the Captain's gig coming alongside the stern there, and I just walked-- waded across the water, by now it's about ankle deep, you know, and I waded across the stern, climbed in the Admiral's barge, and away we go, 50 feet away to Ford Island. And uh.. that was the end of it. I mean that's-- you know, it was all over by then, and we should have known better, but somebody had a radio, and it was spreading all kinds of rumors about landings in <inaudible> and several places, you know.

**Judith LaFleur:** When you say you were down at the battle station, and it was hard to handle the shells, do you remember how many shells you actually had to handle, and had to..

**Ralph William Landreth:** Oh, they uh.. well we had a battle crew for the shells was only two people. And they-- you know, here's the thing sitting up here with a nose cone, and they pulled off- off of one the sleds, and started

cranking her on like a coin spinning on the floor. And they walked it over to this upright tray, and spin it in there, and hydraulics would push it up to the- to the gun port.

**Judith LaFleur:** To the gun port. And how- do you know how many shells? You can go ahead and sit down, if you want.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, I don't know, it was uh.. I would guess there's about 25 or 30.

**Judith LaFleur:** And how long were you at your battle station, do you remember?

**Ralph William Landreth:** How long--

**Judith LaFleur:** Do you have any sense of how much time you were at your battle station?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Not really. I was uh.. in fact when I got over to Ford Island, I was surprised at the time, which was less than ten o'clock, and uh..

**Judith LaFleur:** When you-- I'm sorry, go ahead.

**Ralph William Landreth:** No, that's all right.

**Judith LaFleur:** So did you feel the- the big explosion that everybody remembers?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Mm-hmm.

**Judith LaFleur:** While you were on the Arizona, is that the one you described to us earlier? That was the one.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Mm-hmm, actually, it was two blasts that knocked me off my feet. The second one was- was uh.. it was not a- as big a shell. It

glanced- glanced off the side of the turret, and went down three decks before it exploded in the Officer's Mess storeroom.

**Judith LaFleur:** Did you see that? Did you see that shell?

**Ralph William Landreth:** I didn't see the shot, no. that's outside of the turret.

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay, and while these explosions were going off, and you were in the battle station, did you see any injured men coming up and going by you going out?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Not really. Most of them, they're all walking, and then they-- I didn't see any cuts or bruises or blood or anything. They uh.. they had a lot of those lower handling people went up through turret three, too. There was uh.. you know, could-- difficult ladders to climb, and they-- you know, they had to wait in line for them. They wasn't waiting. They went to turret three.

**Judith LaFleur:** So then you got up on the deck, and you went to the fantail. Is that what you said?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Mm-hmm.

**Judith LaFleur:** And stepped onto the Admiral's barge.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Mm-hmm.

**Judith LaFleur:** Were you with other shipmates when you did that?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah, there was about five or six of us went on the Admiral's barge, and that-- Captain's gig stayed there, and brought-- eventually brought some more on.

**Judith LaFleur:** and while you were- when you came up on the deck, did you observe anything when you were looking around?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Oh yeah, looked around, and I see a lot of smoke, and fire and oil that thick on the top of the water. Guys swimming in it, bodies floating in it. In fact, when we got over to- to Ford Island, they had a little tiny dock there, this Admiral's barge, just the nose of it would fit up there, and there was a guy in the water down there, and- and me and another guy went in to boost him up to the little pier, and then I had a hell of a time, I had to climb on the rocks to get out of there, because I couldn't-- you know, oil on your hands and stuff, you couldn't hold on to anything.

**Judith LaFleur:** How many people were on the Admiral's- Admiral's barge with you?

**Ralph William Landreth:** About five or six.

**Judith LaFleur:** About five or six? And were they- was the barge shuttling back and forth from the ship? Is that what--

**Ralph William Landreth:** Evidently they had made some more tours before-- trips before I got there, yeah.

**Judith LaFleur:** And what did you do when you got to Ford Island?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, there's a whole bunch of people in this Quonset hut. As I know, Quonset huts usually held ammunition. For some reason, there wasn't any in this Quonset hut. And I was thinking, this ain't a very safe place to be, you know. But uh.. you know, there was-- like I say, it was all over by the time I got there.

**Judith LaFleur:** Did you observe anything from there, when you looked back at the- at the Battleship row, or when you looked at--

**Ralph William Landreth:** I didn't see anything, not even many of our planes.

**Judith LaFleur:** Did you observe- observe any of the other ships in trouble, and the--

**Ralph William Landreth:** Oh yeah, yeah, yes, I think, by the time I got there, got over to Ford Island, the- the Oklahoma had already turned turtle, right? Uh.. the Vestal was gone, I wondered how the Hell they got underway, and uh.. they uh.. I don't know, there- there was even some smoke and stuff over in the Navy Yard, and I- I never figured that out either.

**Judith LaFleur:** And how many-- do you have any other specific memories of that-- of the attack period itself, and coming over to Ford Island, and being on board during the attack?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, no not really. I-- Uh.. I can, you know, I can picture that boat deck and the mess it was in. Of course the forward tripod was just out of sight over there. But uh..

**Judith LaFleur:** When you came up on deck, you mean, the mess that was on the deck?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah, mm-hmm.

**Judith LaFleur:** After you came over to Ford Island, how long were you in the Quonset hut?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Oh, I- I imagine a couple of hours.

**Judith LaFleur:** And what did you do then?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, they come through asking for volunteers to help uh.. boat crews or- or motor launches, and oil boats and stuff, to carry the wounded over to the hospital on the base. And uh.. I went with them, and we worked at it for-- several hours till it got dark.

**Judith LaFleur:** What did you do?

**Ralph William Landreth:** And uh..

**Judith LaFleur:** You were on a boat?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah.

**Judith LaFleur:** helping, pulling people out of the water?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah. Well mostly we- we'd pull alongside of a ship, like these battleships, and take, you know, their wounded, and take them to the hospital. Uh.. we didn't do a lot of fishing people out of the water by that time. Uh.. and then, when it got dark, they told us to go on over to the receiving ship, and- and I did that, and they gave us some clothes, and gave us, you know, a place to sleep, and a shower and everything.

**Judith LaFleur:** Do you remember what time that was, or how late in the day that was?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, it was after dark, you know, it was maybe seven, eight o'clock at night.

**Judith LaFleur:** So how many people were helping out on the boat that you were on?

**Ralph William Landreth:** There was just three of us, the uh.. coxswain, and the machinist's mate and myself.

**Judith LaFleur:** Well how many people -- is it hard for you to talk about what you were doing on the boat? Is this a difficult thing for you to remember?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, just, you know, lifting and helping people aboard and all of that.

**Judith LaFleur:** Because they were in pretty bad shape?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah, some of them. Uh.. some of them were on stretchers already, you know?

**Judith LaFleur:** What ships did you go to, to-- do you recall which ships you got the injured people from?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah, West Virginia, and uh.. gee, I don't remember now. Don't even remember-- I just-- <laughs>

**Judith LaFleur:** Did you help out with the Oklahoma or the Arizona?

**Ralph William Landreth:** No.

**Judith LaFleur:** The West Virginia.

**Ralph William Landreth:** No help for the Arizona, and it took them three weeks to get most of the bodies out of the- out of the Oklahoma.

**Judith LaFleur:** Do you remember how many sailors you- you took on board your- your boat, while you were shuttling them back to the shore?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah, just three. There might have been another guy. I can't- I can't remember.

**Judith LaFleur:** So you did that for a few hours, or just one trip?

**Ralph William Landreth:** No, there was two or three trips.

**Judith LaFleur:** Two or three trips, from the boat back to Ford Island?

**Ralph William Landreth:** No.

**Judith LaFleur:** Where did you bring them to?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, I got off at the hospital when we quit doing the trips.

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay. And then that's where you got your-- that's where you bedded down for the night. Did you get something to eat there?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Mm-hmm. Yeah, I think so. I don't think-- remember being hungry, you know. <laughs>. Next morning, they put me on the Pennsylvania, it was in dry dock.

**Judith LaFleur:** Oh, what did you do on the Pennsylvania?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Ah, <laughs> Ah, they put me on the six inch gun crew. <laughs> And uh.. I don't know, we just-- we was there two or three months, I think it was. No, not that long, because we got sent back to- to uh, San Francisco, uh.. for repairs, and refitting. You know, they take some of those old fashioned guns on, and put 40 millimeters, and five inchers where the six inchers were and stuff.

**Judith LaFleur:** So what was the day after December 7th like for you? What-- do you remember?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, I don't know, I think-- I think I was pretty shaky at that, you know? <laughs> It started catching up with me out there. Well...

**Judith LaFleur:** So were you working? Did you- did you go back and do anything with the boat crews, or did you stay with the Pennsylvania?

**Ralph William Landreth:** No, I stayed with the Pennsylvania at the truth. We put in a couple of months there, at uh, at San Francisco. Yeah, what's-- you know that boatyard was on the tip of my tongue all my life, and I- now I can't remember it. It's right where they built the stadium for the San Francisco Giants. Yeah.

**Judith LaFleur:** Do you have any other recollections that you want to tell us about, of the-- about December 7th itself? Anything you want to make sure that we record, since this is an opportunity to record your memories?

**Ralph William Landreth:** No, I know there was an awful lot of heroics going on, although I wasn't part of that.

**Judith LaFleur:** Did you see any of that, any of the heroics?



**Ralph William Landreth:** I didn't actually see it. I see- I saw some people being assisted, you know, that were swimming, and stuff, but uh.. Like I say, I wasn't part of it, I was in that Quonset hut. <laughs>.

**Judith LaFleur:** Okay, that's fine. Karen, do you have some questions you'd like to ask?

<crew talk>

**Karen Byrne:** Going back for just a minute, to when you were at your battle station on the Arizona, could you- could you feel the heat from that intense fire where you were?

**Ralph William Landreth:** No, I was-- I didn't really know about the fire until I got outside. On the quarter deck there. Yeah. I'd say, you know, that some people was telling me, you know, they could see guys being burnt up, you know, and stuff like that. I never saw any of that.

**Karen Byrne:** And when you went out on the quarter deck, what- what could you see from where you were?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Mostly smoke. You know, there was- there was a little bit of fire here and there, but uh.. there wasn't no roaring and thing like a blast- bomb blast.

**Karen Byrne:** And could you see planes? Were the Japanese planes still overhead?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Not- not after I got out on deck, no.

**Karen Byrne:** But before that, you were watching the planes?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah, through- through the-- you know, the pointer and the trainer for the gu- guns, you know, the pointer was up, the trainer moves around, I was a trainer, but to get a sight port, because sometimes you actually shot these guns by sight for a towed target or

something, and you could see a little bit of what's going on. Like the planes coming in directly f- from the rear.

**Karen Byrne:** How close do you think the planes were to the ship?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, the one I saw was less than 1,000 feet, that's for sure, because we were strafing then, they would be that low.

**Karen Byrne:** So, you could see-- could you see the pilot?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, I saw the pilot on that one when I bought the paper, I saw the pilot in that plane. And you know, I couldn't make out his features, but I saw the helmet and the stuff.

**Karen Byrne:** After 19-- excuse me, after 1941, when was the next time that you were back at the Arizona?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Hmm, 19.. 90.

**Karen Byrne:** 1990.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Mm-hmm. My uh.. my wife's-- wife and her folks came over with me. And we toured the-- they had the memorial built by then, and we toured that, and uh.. met this Kiefer Jellio [ph?] guy, and uh.. and then we did the other islands, too. Sort of a vacation.

**Karen Byrne:** What- what was it like to be back there after almost 50 years?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, I don't know. Uh.. it's hard to say. You know, there's a guy followed me over here from Rockledge where I live now, in Florida, just to take my picture at that memorial, and he ain't going to get on there. <laughs> But uh.. the Ranger, you know, that was out there, stationed out there, said I was looking at the list, you know, it was up there higher, wasn't it, bigger? And uh.. he said he saw my eyes welling up. <laughs> Great. But uh.. I never one- was one to show emotions, but it did get to me a little bit. That old I-Catch-'Em-Kidd, [ph?] he was our Captain before he made

Admiral, and he came back aboard as Admiral. Yeah.. I-Catch-'Em, that's disrespectful. Isaac C Kidd.

**Karen Byrne:** Have you-- over the years, have you- have you really had the opportunity, or did you ever take the time to- to talk about your experiences on December 7th?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, I didn't-- I guess I lived 40 years without talking to anybody about it. And I-- I moved around the state of Florida for, oh, maybe 30 years or more. I finally settled in Rockledge. Uh.. and some old guy, uh.. Harry Pearl [ph?] whatever his name, was Secretary of the Pearl Harbor Survivors. I met him somewhere, and we got to talking, and he- insisted that I come to one of their meetings. And now I've been here ever since. You know, I-- I don't know, I-- newspapers are, you know, interviewed me for-- several times, pictures. One guy took a glamour photo of me. Had me posing, you know, so-- <laughs> But uh.. I've always kept it short, because I-- you know, it's a short story. All this happened in less than an hour, you know.

**Karen Byrne:** So 40 years before you talked about it.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Mm-hmm.

**Karen Byrne:** Tomorrow's December 7th, are you going to the memorial tomorrow?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Yeah. Yeah, we got invited. Admiral Conway or something, uh.. Admiral of the Hawaiian District of something. He invited us to a service on the Memorial tomorrow at six o'clock in the morning. Uh, and then to a buffet at his house, because he owns a little shack, or has an Admiral somewhere on Ford Island, I think. And uh.. and a buffet afterwards.

**Karen Byrne:** Besides being up at six in the morning, is that going to be a difficult experience, do you think?

**Ralph William Landreth:** Well, I don't think so, because I'm getting immune to it, I guess.

**Karen Byrne:** And earlier you told me you were-- are you considering having your ashes placed on the memorial?

**Ralph William Landreth:** On what?

**Karen Byrne:** Are you thinking about having your ashes--

**Ralph William Landreth:** Oh, ashes. Oh, ashes, there we go again. Yeah, I was thinking about it. Uh.. at first my wife was adamant. Nah, and now it seems like she doesn't care, you know. I liked it because it was cheap.  
<laughs>

**Karen Byrne:** Well, we appreciate you talking to us. Is there- is there anything else before we stop, that you'd like to tell us?

**Ralph William Landreth:** No, I just <inaudible> I didn't overhear-- my wife overheard somebody discussing Kimmel and <inaudible> and I think they got shortchanged, both of them, because they knew more about it in Washington than we did, and they didn't let us know, or let them know, rather. They got crucified.

**Karen Byrne:** Well, thank you very much. We appreciate it. This is very valuable to many people for years, so thank you very much for everything you did in 1941, and what you're doing for us today.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Thank you.

**Judith LaFleur:** Thank you. Thank you for talking to us.

**Ralph William Landreth:** Great.

#### End of Tape 411 Ralph William Landreth ####